

CATS



The Official Journal of the Capital Area Timex/Sinclair Users Group

Presidential Ramblings

Here it is again, the NL deadline. Again, I have a writer's block. So, first, let's talk about the last meeting.

Item, by item: 1) Mark Fisher reported that he is still adjusting and acquiring hardware for our BBS - we approved payment for both Kaypro computers that he now has (a K-4 & a K-10). When he gets the "10" running, our system will be back to normal. 2) Hank Dickson relayed a message that we may be able to obtain a projector monitor (a "Limelight"), free. The members overwhelmingly approved, so we'll see what the next meeting brings. 3) We have an election of officers coming up in June, I appointed Barry Washington as Nominating Committee Chairman. He will be looking for Comm. members and candidates. Please give him your help. 4) Tim still needs articles for the NL - send him your writings. 5) From a phone call to Herb Schaaf, I learned that he has done wonders with the Kodak Datashow that the club obtained in February. 6) Mannie Quintero reported on several "buy" items, check with him for details. All that I remember is that the Gold Card is now available at a reduced price. Check with Mannie for details.

Tom Robbins recently ran a benchmark test (Landmark, I think) on his Gold Card-equipped QL. He compared the QL, emulating an MS-DOS PC, with his XT-clone. The QL was faster!

Because of a program change we will have a special guest leader for our May meeting. Carolyn Robbins will teach us how to use Archive's language. (Tom says that she does not call it programming because one does not use line numbers.) Come and learn how to organize your data (addresses, inventories, phone numbers, or whatever). If you heard Carolyn's last program, you know that we have an expert - she uses Archive professionally and knows how to use it!

If I read this myself, I can be reminded to finish up my version of the disk cataloging program. I had added some improvements, but then we moved to a new house. Did you know that new houses don't come with curtains, window blinds, all the telephone lines you need, etc, etc. I haven't been able to program a line! Come June I will have to finish it, I am on the program!

See you on May 9th and June 13th.

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Key Dates

- 9 May: CATS Meeting
11:00 Workshop
1:30 Executive Board Meeting
2:00 General Meeting
- 24 May: Newsletter Deadline
For the Next Issue
- 13 June : CATS Meeting

Meeting Subject

Carolyn Robbins will give a class on learning Archive. Bring your computer, printer, and some mailing labels. Carolyn will show you how to create your own Archive procedure and use it to print mailing labels. Carolyn is even planning to assign some homework.

From The Editor:

As I sit here writing this column, I am watching the PBS Series "The Machine That Changed The World" about the history of computers. This series started in Mid-April and may still be running when this newsletter comes out. If not, look for a repeat showing some time soon.

I am recording the one episode that focuses on the personal computer, from the 70's until present. So far it is pretty through about it's coverage.

One news item I have this month is a starting of a QL FTP Server (File Transfer Protocol). This is a computer connected to the Internet that allows anybody to connect and download QL software/files.

Timo Salmi (of Quanta fame) moderates the FTP server garbo.uwasa.fi. He has set aside a portion of his hard disk for QL files (he also has an MS-DOS section).

I'm trying to get our software sources in Europe (England and Germany) to put the new QL software on the server, so that I can download the stuff rather quickly, instead of waiting for the disks to arrive in the mail. Plus, with the files on the Server, anybody from anywhere can get a hold of the software just as quickly.

I've heard that there versions 2.01 and 2.1 of C68 are available and version 3.0 might be coming out sometime soon. I've only got a copy of version 1.15. I have to rely on someone in Europe to copy the disks for me and send them my way. That person may have a number of other people relying on him. With the server, you do it once and all can benefit.

I'll keep you posted about the progress of the QL FTP Server.

A about a month and a half ago, Judy Muir, of Pennsylvania, called looking for a few T/S items. She is looking for the software that goes with the Oscar Bar Code Reader that was designed for the TI, C-64, 1000, 1500, and 2068. She had the hardware but no software. She is also looking for a color unit that was sold for the PC8300 (ZX81 clone) to allow it to do color. If anyone has such a beast, let Judy know at (412) 379-8762.

That's all for this month. See you at the next meeting.

Happy Hacking,

Tim

Second Time Around for VU-File

by Joe Miller

I'm surprised at the number of persons asking about a good simple file management program for the 2068 computer. I hear from people who want a simple data base for name and address files, mailing lists, cd disc collection and the list go on and on. Well there is a good simple data base program for our little computer. TIMEX did produce a simple file management program called VU-FILE. VU-FILE is best thought of as a powerfully 3x5 type system that can be up-dated, sorted, changed and printed. VU-FILE is a very powerful system. it's also user friendly. VU-FILE comes on tape and can be modified to run on disk. To see the power of VU-FILE and simple some of it features, load the program on the tape called GAZETTEER. After loading the program, try it out. Gazetteer is an excellent example of what VU-FILE can do. Note how the fields are set up. VU-FILE must be thought out before using. Because of limited memory, the length and number of fields must be

carefully planned. Again, note how the program GAZETTEER is set up. Now clear the computer and load VU-FILE. After the program loads, you will get a screen to be used for the record layout. Play with the display and note how frendly the program is. Next, go to the next screen by pressing STOP. You're now in the data field. Again, play around with the program until you get the hang of it and go on to the next screen. Continue to play with the commands and move around the screen with the arrow keys until you are ready for the next screen. Take note of what is happening. When you are comfortable with each screen, clear the computer and start over. After trying out the program a couple of times, you can now attempt to enter your own data fields and enjoy the power of VU-FILE. VU-FILE is simple to use and the more you use it, the better you will realize it's power. Have fun.

Interesting QUANTA Articles

by Mannie Quintero

Because the dearth of articles for the newsletter leaves a lot of blank space, something must be done to fill the space and a listing of articles from other newsletters or pubs (no, friends, not the drink-selling type) has been suggested as a filler.

Readers must realize that since QUANTA is the pub involved, there will be little or nothing mentioned other than QL stuff with, maybe, the incidental reference to the SPECTRUM/AMIGA/ATARI or other brands of machines. As you will be able to see, the QUANTA range is wide and it might tempt you to become a member. My selection of articles will cover from novice to experienced QL user.

Elementary Archiving 1 & 2,
Mar-Apr 92.

April 1992 - QL Wish List;
Quill and Archive; Library
Corner & Discs

March 1992 - How to Alter a
Disc or Cartridge File
(program); Elementary
Archiving, Part 1; Renaming a
Floppy Disk (program)

February 1992 - QLAW (an
update); Speedscreen for Free;
Corruption (no, not in
Congress, but in Archive);
Library Computability(sic)

January 1992 - Superbasic
Channels; Power Supplies
(battery-backup w/diagrams)

December 1991 - Printing
Foreign Characters; Disk
Drives In Pain? and Snobbery
(Making Boots)

November 1991 - Linked
Lists(Archive); Archive Data
Retrieval; Red, Green and
Blue; Improving Screen Text;
Multitasking / Switching
Programs; Reading Files
(program)

October 1991 - From Your
Software Controller; CalQLator
v.3.52; Speeding Up Archive
(altkeys)

September 1991 - Videotaping
from the QL; PC Comparisons

August 1991 - Disk Indexing;
Changing Colours

Jul-Aug 1991 - Elementary
Programming, Parts 1 & 2

July 1991 - Amending/Creating
Archive Data Bases; Use of
Export/Import in the PSION
Quartet; Quasi-Virus for the
QL?

June 1991 - Scanners;
Learning Superbasic; QL Serial
Port Problems

May 1991 - North American QL

April 1991 - ABACUS Tips;
Invisible files foil
"Compare"; 'MSDOS-like' Dir
Command (program);
Disk Indexer - more please!

March 1991 - EPROMS and the
QL;
Printer Buffers and Printer
Drivers; Ser-Ser QL Link;
Another old fool?

February 1991 - Archive Input
Query; Quill Translates
Wishlist (program)

January 1991 - Fellow
Loonies 2; Simple Tips;
PSION Tips (program); Quill,
Archive, Abacus, QPAC2

December 1990 - Beginners'
Corner; Archive Tricks

November 1990 - Conqueror
Summary User Notes; Two Minute
Tip; QL Ideas Notebook
(programs)

October 1990 - Altkeys and
Quill: Anagrams (program)

September 1990 - Some Popular
Misconceptions (Mostly about
filenames); Abacus for Lists;
Archive: Your Flexible Friend
(proc); Multi-column Output
from Quill

August 1990 - Quill/Altkeys

July 1990 - Archive: Your
Flexible Friend (procs)

June 1990 - Embedded Codes
for Use with Quill and the
Epson FX-80 Printer

May 1990 - Review of QPAC2;
Archive: Your Flexible Friend
(procs)

April 1990 - Archive: Your
Flexible Friend (procs)

March 1990 - Beginners Course
on QPTR (program); Make Quill
Work for You; Data Transfer
with the Kermit Product

February 1990 - Multidos Disk
Access Utility

January 1990 - Directories in
Abacus (program); Defining
Altkeys (Toolkit2); Renaming a
Disk

December 1989 - QL
Information in the QUANTA
Library; Quill Multiple
Printer Drivers - Again;

November 1989 - Keywords
Review

September 1989 - A Sort of
Runic Rhyme

August 1989 - Microemacs
Editor (Update 3.9p)

July 1989 - QL Users Do It

June 1989 - On-Screen
Capslock Indicator; EMACS and
IBM Disks

May 1989 - "Quill" and
Printer Drivers

April 1989 - QL to PC File
Transfer

March 1989 - More on the
Archive/Taskmaster Problem

February 1989 - Screen Print
Codes in Archive

December 1988 - Review of
Discover; Xchange Task
Sequencing Language

August 1988 - PSION PC Four

July 1988 - Indexing Archive
Files; Input, Quicker Quill
Commands, D_MON & Line Numbers

February 1988 - Superbasic
Width Settings

January 1988 - Problem
Section; Networking

August 1987 - Notes on
Archive as a Database

And here I have run out of
QUANTAs. The rest is up to
you. Let me know if you'd like
access to any of my copies.
Better yet, why not join?

Additions to CATS QL Library

by Tim Swenson

In the past few months I have
recieved some disks containing
public domain and Freeware software
for the QL. The disks came from
Howard Clase of Canada, and Franz
Herrmann of Germany.

For the record, Freeware software
is software that is copyright by the
author, but everyone is free to copy
and distribute the software. Code
from Freeware programs can not be
used in any commercial program.
With Public Domain software, the
author gives up all rights to the
program. The Freeware concept is
heavily encouraged and used the the
FreeSoftware Foundation.

Here is a list of the stuff from
Franz:

Intergroup Freeware Exchange
Database - We have recieved this
once before, but the executable
program that provided easy access to
the database would not execute. Now
everything is running fine. The IFE
is functionally like the Quanta
Library, but encompasses a number of
QL User Groups, most of them in
Europe.

QED Text Editor - This editor,
written by Jan Bredenbeek, looks
like it is based on the Metacomco
text editor ED. From looking at the
help file for QED, I could see that
the command set is almost the same
as ED.

ZOO, HAR, LHX - These three
programs are archiving programs,
much like the well known PKZIP suite
of programs. Where as PKZIP is used
mostly for MS-DOS (but being ported
to other platforms) ZOO, HAR, and
LHX are used widely on a variety of

systems. All three allow you to pack a number of files into a single compressed file.

File compression is great for uploading a number of files to a BBS as one file, and for putting more data on disks to be sent via the mail. All three programs come with source code. This is convenient for those that want to study the file compression algorithm or tinker with the program.

The group also has a copy of QLUNZIP, a program that will unzip files that have been archived using PKZIP.

FLEX and YACC - FLEX and YACC are two utilities that are used in creating compilers and interpreters. FLEX is a Freeware version of the Unix utility LEX. FLEX is used to create the code for a lexical analyser. YACC (short for Yet Another Compiler Compiler) is used to create the code for a parser. These two tools have been used for years in the Unix environment. Learning either one of these programs on the QL also means that your experience is portable to other systems.

PROFF - PROFF is a portable version of the Unix text formatter ROFF. ROFF is the basis of the other Unix text formatters, TROFF and NROFF.

MKTYPES - This is a suite of programs used to create function declarations in C programs. This is then used in compiling all modules of your program, allowing type checking across modules. For the die-hard C programmer.

CCCC - This is a file that contains the winners of the Obfuscated C Contest from 1985 on to about 1991(?). When unarchived, it's a large number of files. Obfuscated means to make unclear or hard to understand. Although some may say that C is already obfuscated, there is a contest that takes it to the limit. One category is "the hardest / most obscure way to do a simple item."

As you can see from the files from Franz, C is being used a lot to port programs to the QL, plus Unix is one of the primary sources for programs. This comes from three facts:

1. C programs are very portable when written properly.

2. Unix, because of its different dialects, has stressed C portability.

3. Unix has a wealth of Freeware software (with source code) ready for porting to a new computer. Most MS-DOS programs do not come with source code. If they do, they are too MS-DOSed to be portable.

From Howard Clase comes a number of programs that he has had published in QL World and has made publicly available. These descriptions are short because I have not had the time to evaluate each package. The descriptions are based on quick readings of the _doc files.

Here is a list of the packages:

FTIDY - File Tidy. A program to copy files and tidy up your file system.

DIR_EDIT - Directory Edit. "Allows you to edit the directory of a device." Not too sure what this means.

GRAPH - Graph Plot Library for inclusion into your own programs. Loads like Toolkit II if you don't have it in ROM.

FOUNTS - Fonts for the QL for use in your programs. A number of different fonts are included as examples.

GLAZIER - A screen/window design package for programmers. Allows the user to draw windows on the screen and Glazier will produce the SuperBasic code for those windows.

PROCS - A number of misc. SuperBasic procedures for use in your own programs.

MISC - A number of short SuperBasic programs.

This is the disk for those of you that are into SuperBasic programming. The utilities included can expand the capabilities of your programs and skills.

Both of the two disks are available from the CATS QL Library and, of course, from me.

D.O.S. for the 2068

by Joe Miller

Things are looking up for user's of the 2068 computers. There are several D.O.S (disc operating system) and D.U.S. (disc Utility system) for the Aerco and Larkin disc interfaces. Over the next few months, I hope to report on three of these. I've received documents on D.U.S. version 4.0, written by Kristian Boisvert, dated 1990 and a copy of LOGICALL version 4.6. I've heard of Logically's system and have been told to expect no sweet surprises because the system was developed with ease of use in mind. I do have a copy of Logically on disk and hope to have a copy of D.U.S. soon. I've reported on SUPERBOOT version 9.0 EPROM for the AERCO FD 68 DISC SYSTEM in past CATS newsletters and before fully understanding the system, I've just been given version 10.0 to take for a test drive. One would think it would be fun to test disc systems and decide which is the better system. Not so! One must not forget that before the FD 68, Larkin, JLO and disc systems, we were in the land of the slow tapes. Member, long waits to save and long waits to load. Well, all the aforementioned companies took a step forward and we had disc interfaces for the 2068 computers. In the rush to develop fully operating systems and be first to market them, a

number of companies produced the systems and features we have today. We, the user's purchased systems with what is considered basic features. Before improvement were made to the basic D.O.S. than in use, newer computers were introduced to the market and profits ruled. The quest for improved interfaces and more useful utilities were answered by programmers who decided to stay with the 2068 and fully develop it's power. This is the current state of the 2068 computer. We can be thankful for the systems in use today. Today's programmers has developed a range of utilities that are second to no other computer in the 2068 class. Next month, I will review LOGICALL and have a report in the next issue of C.A.T.S. JOE

CATS maintains a gratis exchange of newsletters with approximately 30 Users Groups across the U.S. and Canada. Groups not sending a newsletter to us for six months are automatically taken off the list.

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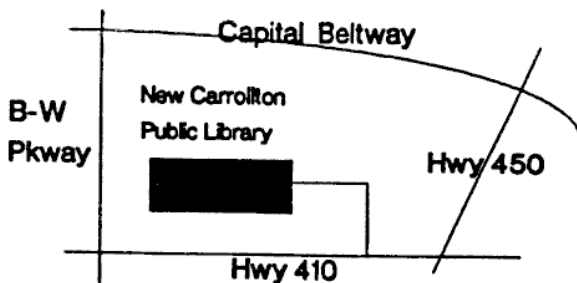
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The Capital Area Timex/Sinclair Users Group is a not-for-profit group devoted to serving the interests of those who own, use, or are interested in the Timex/Sinclair family of computers.

FIRST CLASS MAIL



CATS Newsletter
P.O. Box 11017
Takoma Park, MD 20913



The next meeting of CATS will be held on: May 9, 1992

11:00 AM Hardware Workshop
2:00 PM General Meeting

At: New Carrollton Public Library 7414 Riverdale Road (Hwy 410), New Carrollton, MD

IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER OF CATS. THIS IS THE ONLY ISSUE YOU WILL RECEIVE

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Timex SIG on CompuServe: Wednesday night, 10:00 PM Eastern time (GO CLUB).

Networks

per year.

Memberships cost \$15 per year, are good for 12 months, and include all privileges (access to libraries, group buys, etc.). A newsletter only subscription is available for persons living outside the Washington Metro area and is \$12

Newsletter

Monthly meetings are held from 11:00 AM to 4:30 PM, on the second Saturday of each month, at the New Carrollton Public Library.

Meetings